

Daniel S. Schanck Observatory
On campus of Rutgers University at George Street,
near Hamilton Street
New Brunswick
Middlesex County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-723

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. NJ-723

DANIEL S. SCHANCK OBSERVATORY

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Location: On campus of Rutgers University at George Street
near Hamilton Street, Middlesex County, New Brunswick, N.J.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Rutgers, the State University

Present Use: Not used

Brief Statement
of Significance: First building at Rutgers erected exclusively
for scientific purposes. Dedicated June 18, 1866

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Rutgers, the State University
2. Date of erection: 1866
3. Architect: Willard Smith
4. Sources of information: Weekly Fredonian, New Brunswick, June 20, 1866.
Minutes and Papers of Rutgers Board of Trustees, 1864-1867.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: First building at Rutgers erected exclusively for scientific purposes. Proposed by Professor David Murray, who prepared original specifications. Cost approximated \$5000. Dedicated June 18, 1866; main address by Joseph P. Bradley, later Justice, United States Supreme Court.

Prepared by Richard P. McCormick
Professor of History, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey
March 1960

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The building consists of two tall octagonal structures connected by a one-story passage, three feet long. The main, front octagon, two stories high with a revolving hip roof, has sides of equal length, 7'-4", and is 17'-10" in diameter. The rear octagon, one high

story, is of irregular shape with a major diameter of 15'-6".

The building is painted brick, with wood cornices and entrance porch, brownstone floor and steps, and a brownstone water table. The rear building has a projecting brick string course below the cornice. The main building has a string course below a row of high round windows and a double course of corbelled brick above the windows immediately below the cornice. Set in the brick wall of the main building, above the entrance porch, is a brown stone plaque with incised lettering: "Daniel S. Schanck Observatory, 1866". The small gable roofed, Corinthian entrance porch has columns at the front corners, flat pilasters against the wall, entablature, and pediment.

There is a small entrance hall on the ground floor of the main building, with a stairway to the upper floor. The stairway is wood, curved against the octagonal outer walls, with a heavy hand rail and a sturdy, turned newel post and balusters, one to a tread.

The second floor, over the main building, has a round window in each side of the octagon, and a metal covered wooden roof framed with radiating beams which rest on heavy wheels running on a round wooden track. There is a wrought iron bar and brace attached to two of the beams for the purpose of turning the roof. A trap door in the roof allows for the projection of the instrument.

The rear room has an open wood trussed roof and narrow openings on opposite sides from floor to ceiling for the elevation of instruments. These openings are closed with long, narrow paneled doors with raised mouldings.

Prepared by George Brokaw Howell
Architect, Rutgers University (ret.)
New Brunswick, New Jersey
December 1960